

CAPE GIRARDEAU COUNTY

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www.swcd.mo.gov/capegirardeau/index.htm



June 2012

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NRCS District Conservationist

Monica Barnfield

NRCS Soil Conservationist

Scott Crumpecker

NRCS Soil Conservationist

Brad Pobst

*Private Lands Conservationist
Missouri Department of Conservation*

*Lend a Helping Hand to
Conservation of Land*

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

NEWSLETTER

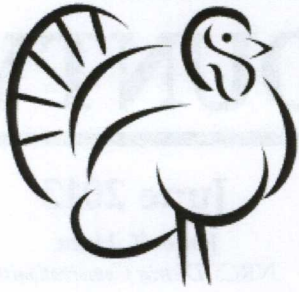
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Pollinator Habitat

Pollinators are essential to many natural ecosystems and provide value to global food webs. Pollinators include bees, flies, birds, butterflies, and even bats. Planting pollinating plant species, i.e. wildflowers, creates habitat for pollinators. One can plant wildflowers in the garden or on large-scale plots. Pollinator plots can be part of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or the Conservation Security Program (CSP). Landowners enrolled in these programs receive cost-share/payments for the practices. Here are a few nice things to remember about pollinating plants; the seed is cheaper to purchase than expected, they benefit wildlife, and they are easier to establish than expected.





The Importance of Wild Turkey Nesting and Brood-Rearing Habitat

All wildlife species require food, water, and cover (habitat). Due to their generally indiscriminant consumption of an immense variety of succulent grasses, forbs, hard and soft mast, and insects food and water are rarely limiting for turkeys. The quality and quantity of habitat on the other hand can and does impact wild turkey abundance. Since fluctuations in wild turkey populations are driven largely by changes in nest success and poult survival, the habitats utilized by turkeys during the spring and summer months are often the most critical.

During spring, hens are preoccupied with searching for safe places where they can incubate their clutches. Since turkeys nest on the ground and must incubate their clutches for nearly a month, hens select areas with abundant ground cover. Pastures, right-of-ways, old fields, and young forested areas can all serve as turkey nest sites provided that they offer sufficient cover. In general, hen turkeys select nest sites in areas that contain grasses, forbs, and shrubs that are about knee-high. Therefore, providing nesting cover for turkeys can be as simple as allowing the vegetation in open fields to reach sufficient height during the nesting season, which generally occurs from April-June in Missouri.

To create nesting and brood-rearing habitat in forested areas, thinning is recommended to allow sunlight to reach the forest floor and stimulate vegetative growth. As forests mature, their value as turkey nesting and brood-rearing habitat, declines. Although a fully-stocked mature oak forest will provide an important source of acorns during fall and winter, the lack of groundcover will mean that the area is not likely to be used by turkeys for nesting or brood-rearing.

During summer, the presence of brood-rearing habitat is critically important to wild turkeys. During a turkey's first month of life, it requires copious amounts of protein, which are needed to promote rapid growth. This protein source comes in the form of insects, which are typically found in areas with abundant ground cover. During the brood-rearing period, open areas become increasingly important for hens and poults. As with nesting cover, vegetative height has a great impact on the potential for areas to serve as brood-rearing habitat. Just as in areas used for nesting, ideal brood-rearing habitat should contain vegetation that is about knee-high. The key to brood-rearing habitat is vegetation tall enough to provide cover for poults, but not tall enough to obstruct the vision of the brood hen. Hens must be able to see over the top of vegetation in order to feel comfortable about taking their broods into these areas.

Since newly-hatched poults are quite small, the density of vegetation is another important component of brood habitat in addition to height. Thick or rank vegetation inhibits the movement of poults. Therefore, ensuring that vegetation remains relatively open at ground-level (60-80% ground cover) is critical. Management tools like prescribed burning, mowing, and grazing can be utilized to maintain the quality of habitats for turkeys, provided that the timing is right. In general, nesting and brood-rearing cover should not be disturbed during April, May or June.

With regard to species composition, a mixture of native grasses and forbs typically provides great nesting and brood-rearing habitat. Unlike exotic sod-forming grasses, which can inhibit movement of poults, native bunch grasses provide the cover needed by young turkeys while also allowing for movement amongst the vegetation. Native warm season grasses (NWSG) make outstanding places for wild turkeys to nest and rear their broods, provided that they possess the previously-mentioned characteristics. When considering establishing NWSG for wild turkeys, shorter grasses like little bluestem and sideoats grama are generally better choices than taller grasses, which can often grow too tall to receive much use by wild turkeys during the brood-rearing season. Folks interested in establishing NWSG should include a substantial forb component in the mix, since these plants attract a lot of insects, which serve as important food for growing poults.

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ANNUAL CAPE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT ESSAY CONTEST

REQUISITES:

- * Applicants must be a graduate of a Cape Girardeau County High School and a Cape Girardeau County resident at the time of graduation from high school.**
- * Applicants must have completed a minimum of 60 hours of college level course work toward an undergraduate degree.**
- * Applicants must be enrolled in a four year degree program that falls into one of the following subject matter categories: Agriculture, Agriculture Business, or Natural Resources**
- * Applicants must have a GPA of a least 2.5.**

Applications may be picked up at the office at 480 West Jackson Trail, Jackson, Missouri.

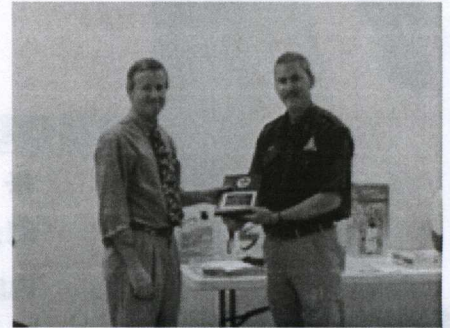
Applications for the \$500 essay contest are due Friday July 13, 2012. Please contact the office at (573) 243-1467 ext 3 if you have any questions.

2011 AWARDS GIVEN AT MARCH OPEN HOUSE



The Cape Girardeau County Soil and Water Conservation District would like to thank everyone that attended and helped to make our Open House on March 28th a success! During the Open House a presentation was given on Bears by Brad Pobst, Private Land Conservationist with the Missouri Department of Conservation. Awards were given for the Conservation Farmer of the Year and the Wildlife Conservationist of the Year.

Accepting the award for Conservation Farmer of the Year was Don and Nancy Schuette (top left) and the award was presented by Clinton Ruppel. Accepting the award for Wildlife Conservationist of the Year was Kent Griffith of Muddy Creek Ranch LLC (middle right) and the award was presented by Brad Pobst.



Elections were also held at the Open House for Areas I and III representing Apple Creek, Shawnee, Randol and Cape Girardeau townships. Gary Bock was elected to represent Area I and Susan Jahn was re-elected to represent Area III. Denise Aufdenberg and Paula Meier presented Clinton Ruppel (bottom left), who chose not to run for re-election, with a plaque of appreciation for his 8 years of service on the SWCD board.

Congratulations to all on all of their hard work and dedication!

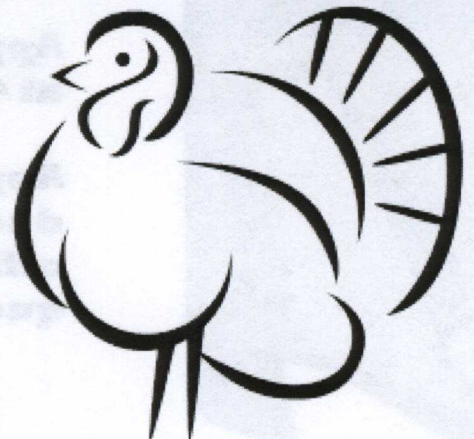


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When managing NWSG for nesting and brood-rearing habitat, again, it is important to remember the characteristics that make these areas preferred by turkeys (knee-high vegetation with about 60-80% ground cover). Prescribed burning (with the assistance of a trained professional) on a 3-4 year rotation is recommended when managing NWSG for wild turkeys. By using rotational prescribed burning, newly-burned areas are capable of serving as brood-rearing habitat during the same year that they are burned, while unburned areas provide nesting cover. This rotational management system ensures that nesting and brood-rearing habitats are available on an annual basis.

For landowners looking to improve their properties for wild turkeys, creating nesting and brood-rearing habitat is a great start because these areas are often the most limiting. Wild turkey abundance is affected greatly by nest success and poult survival; therefore, providing the habitats that turkeys require at this very important time of year should result in improved production and increased turkey numbers.

If you would like assistance with determining the best approach to managing your property for wild turkeys or other wildlife species, contact the Missouri Department of Conservation. The Department's Private Land Conservationists work with landowners on a daily basis to improve their properties for wildlife, and can help you make tremendous strides with your wildlife habitat management goals



Farm Day 2012

On April 25th Denise Aufdenberg (SWCD), Paula Meier (SWCD), Brad Pobst (MDC), and James Hunt (NRCS) had the privilege of speaking to local third graders about soil conservation and streambank erosion. They participated in Farm Day 2012, along with over 800 3rd graders, parents and teachers at Flickerwood Areana, sponsored by the SEMO Cattleman's Association.



Students traveled from one station to another to listen, answer questions, and participate in activities about forestry, pork, beef, poultry, corn, dairy, conservation, bees, soybeans, and received a snack made from some of the products listed above. At the soil conservation stop, Denise, Paula, Brad, and James demonstrated with stream tables, borrowed from the Missouri Department of Conservation, the effect that running water can have on soil. They constructed ponds and streams and showed students effective ways of conserving soil.

Farm Day has been very educational for many children the past 17 years, and we look forward to helping continue this benefit by participating in Farm Day 2013.

Missouri State Women In Ag Conference to be held in Chillicothe

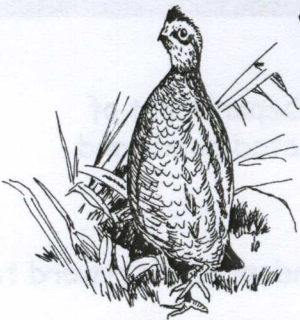
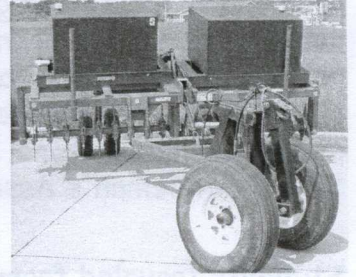
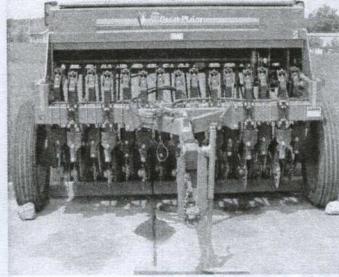
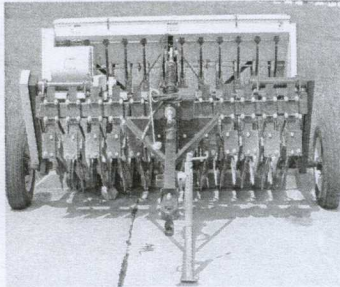
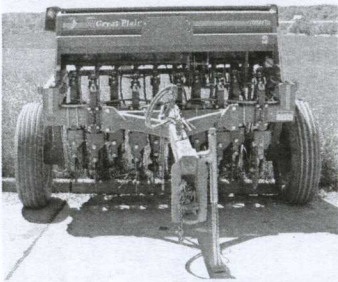
The 18th Annual State Women in Ag Conference will be held in Chillicothe, September 10-12, 2012. The conference will include workshops on organic cheese, Francine's Bakery, soil health, cover crops, internet/personal safety, high tunnels, and fabric to fiber. The conference will also include a tours of Litton Ag Center, Amish working farms, Jakes Wood Products, H&M Bakery, Sherwood Furniture and the Dutch Pantry. For more information please contact the Soil & Water Conservation District at 480 West Jackson Trail, Jackson MO or by calling 573.243.1467 ext. 3.

Prescribed Burn Workshop

A prescribed Burn Workshop will be held on August 14, 2012 at the Missouri Department of Conservation Southeast Regional Office. There will be two sessions offered with the first session from 1:00 till 4:30 pm and the second session will be from 6:00 till 9:30 pm. Register by calling Brad Pobst at 573.243.1467 ext. 123. Dates for participating in an actual burn will be given at the workshop.

FOR RENT NO TILL DRILLS & PASTURE RENOVATOR

The SWCD would like to remind everyone the District has a 10' Great Plains Drill and a 7' Great Plains Drill for rent along with a 8' Truax Drill (warm season grasses). The District also has a Rhino Pasture Renovator also available for rent. The 10' drill rents for \$9/AC, the 7' drill rents for \$8/AC, the 8' drill rents for \$10/AC, and the renovator rents for \$6/AC. If you would like to schedule either the drills or the renovator, please call 573-243-1467 ext 3.



WILDLIFE WAYS DID YOU KNOW.....

hummingbirds, the smallest birds in North America, are the only birds that can fly backwards. Their wings are adapted to helicopter-like-flight-a circular whirl that allows them to hover, move ahead, sideways or backward.



COMING SOON.....

Cape Girardeau County will be hosting an Intensive Grazing School September 5-6, 2012 at the University of Missouri Extension Center. Contact the SWCD office in early August for more information and registration forms.

Non Profit Rate
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Cape Girardeau
Soil and Water Conservation District
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